

individual in the method of tying and knotting the string employed in the manufacture of these missiles;¹ these, however, are often so slight that, even when pointed out, they are scarcely to be detected by a stranger, unless he be one who has bestowed careful attention to the subject. 211
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7. In their savage state they never attempt to represent any object, and, though they do not appear to possess any natural taste for drawing, they differ from the Australians² in the intelligence they display in recognising any familiar form depicted in a sketch; and while no such method for indicating the situation of any place is known or employed among themselves, some of them are quick in understanding a chart of their own country, and are able to point out the sites of their various encampments. 532
151

8. It is hardly necessary to state that they have nothing answering to mile-stones or roadside marks. Swamps are never crossed, but in all cases avoided by circuitous routes; experience seems to have taught them the natural line of fords from salient to salient banks, and, when a creek has to be crossed, they always avail themselves of the advantages thus afforded, even making a detour in order to do so.³ This applies, however, to those occasions when they are not heavily laden, or are carrying articles liable to be damaged by immersion, or which would hinder them from swimming. 487

Swimming.—1. With the exception of some of the *ērem-tā-ga*,⁴ a knowledge of the art of swimming is common to members of both sexes; the *children* even, learning almost as soon as they can run, speedily acquire great proficiency. In this accomplishment the Andamanese greatly surpass the majority of Europeans, but it is probable that, in competition with an experienced English swimmer, their best men would be distanced in the first few hundred yards, it being not so much for speed, as for the length of time they can remain in the water, that they are remarkable. 481

¹ With reference to this circumstance, it may be mentioned that, a few years ago (1876), five aborigines, concerned in the murder near Kyd Island of some Chinese traders with whom they had had a dispute, were discovered by means of the arrows found on the spot, as these were identified by some of their acquaintances then living at Port Blair.

² Brown. [From remarks, however, contained in a recent article, entitled "The Indo-Chinese and Oceanic Races," by Mr. A. H. Keane, which appeared in "Nature" (Jan. 6th, 1881), it would appear that the low estimate of the Australian intellect formed by certain ethnologists is not shared by all, and "many instances are given of their skill even in drawing, a capacity for which was wholly denied them."]

³ Wells are not dug, but when encamping, whether for days or months, care is always taken that the spot selected be near some fresh-water stream.

⁴ The reason of this is obvious, as it is known that the majority of the creeks are fordable in many places within three miles of the coast, even in the rainy season, and, therefore, the necessity of acquiring the art of natation has never been experienced by those permanently resident in the interior.

THE ANDAMAN ISLANDERS

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or form of numerical evaluation is further support for the extremely low stage of cultural development at which they became isolated.

22 ART

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When painting their bodies with ochre the Onges have no idea of symbolic representation, and use only geometrical designs. These invariably seem spontaneous, and in my view do not represent a degenerate form of some more highly evolved art, half forgotten over the centuries; in short, the 'artists' of the Andamans, with no conception of symbolism, are even today less advanced than their Palaeolithic counterparts.

23 DIGGING STICKS

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In late Palaeolithic deposits, stones with holes in them have been found which correspond to those still in use among peoples such as the Bushmen, to add weight to their digging sticks. The absence even today of any form of weighted stick in the Andamans, where stone is plentiful, would appear to antedate the culture at least to early Palaeolithic.

24 HUNTING

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[411]
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The Onges still use the Palaeolithic throwing stick, although it is not their main hunting weapon. They have no idea of fixed traps, which must from the evidence have been known in Palaeolithic times, and it is hard to believe that a people so dependent upon hunting would have lost the art once it had been acquired. They have crude nets which the women use for fishing, but these are probably a comparatively recent introduction, which has arrived via the Nicobars.

25 DOMESTIC ANIMALS

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194

The Andamanese have none, and this would seem to add weight to the evidence for their great antiquity.

26 ECONOMY

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185
437

There is no economic system of any kind, and from the evidence available it is highly unlikely that even the most primitive form ever existed. There is no conception whatever of providing for tomorrow, or of any form of exchange or barter.